

maintained of records in the public reading room that are available for inspection and copying. The index shall be updated at least quarterly with respect to newly included records. A copy of the index shall be provided upon request at a cost not to exceed the direct cost of duplication.

(b) *Electronic reading room.* Amtrak will make available electronically reading room records created by the Corporation on or after November 1, 1996 on its World Wide Web site which can be accessed at <http://www.Amtrak.com>. An index of the Corporation's reading room records will also be made available at the web site. The index will indicate reading room records that are available electronically.

(c) *Frequently requested information.* The FOIA requires that copies of records, regardless of form or format, released pursuant to a FOIA request under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3) that have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records be made publicly available. Such records created by the Corporation after November 1, 1996 will be made available electronically while records created prior to this date will be made available for inspection and copying in Amtrak's public reading room.

(1) Amtrak shall decide on a case-by-case basis whether records fall into the category of "frequently requested FOIA records" based on the following factors:

- (i) Previous experience with similar records;
- (ii) The nature and type of information contained in the records;
- (iii) The identity and number of requesters and whether there is widespread media or commercial interest in the records.

(2) The provision in this paragraph is intended for situations where public access in a timely manner is important. It is not intended to apply where there may be a limited number of requests over a short period of time from a few requesters. Amtrak may remove the records from this category when it is determined that access is no longer necessary.

(d) *Guide for making requests.* A guide on how to use the FOIA for requesting records from Amtrak shall be made available to the public upon request. Amtrak's major information systems will be described in the guide.

§ 701.5 Requirements for making requests.

(a) *General requirements.* (1) A FOIA request can be made by "any person" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(2), which encompasses individuals (including foreign citizens; partnerships; corporations; associations; and local, state, tribal, and foreign governments). A FOIA request may not be made by a Federal agency.

(2) A request must be in writing, indicate that it is being made under the FOIA and provide an adequate description of the records sought. The request should also include applicable information regarding fees as specified in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section.

(b) *How to submit a request.* (1) A request must clearly state on the envelope and in the letter that it is a Freedom of Information Act or "FOIA" request.

(2) The request must be addressed to the Freedom of Information Office; National Railroad Passenger Corporation; 60 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.; Washington, D.C. 20002. Requests will also be accepted by facsimile at (202) 906-2169. Amtrak cannot assure that a timely or satisfactory response under this part will be given to written requests addressed to Amtrak offices, officers, or employees other than the Freedom of Information Office. Amtrak employees receiving a communication in the nature of a FOIA request shall forward it to the FOIA Office expeditiously. Amtrak shall advise the requesting party of the date that an improperly addressed request is received by the FOIA Office.

(c) *Content of the request—(1) Description of records.* Identification of records sought under the FOIA is the responsibility of the requester. The records sought should be described in sufficient detail so that Amtrak personnel can locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. When possible, the request should include specific information

§ 701.6

49 CFR Ch. VII (10–1–10 Edition)

such as dates, title or name, author, recipient, subject matter of the record, file designation or number, or other pertinent details for each record or category of records sought.

(2) *Reformulation of a request.* Amtrak is not obligated to act on a request until the requester provides sufficient information to locate the record. Amtrak may offer assistance in identifying records and reformulating a request where: the description is considered insufficient, the production of voluminous records is required, or a considerable number of work hours would be required that would interfere with the business of the Corporation. The Freedom of Information Office shall notify the requester within ten business days of the type of information that will facilitate the search. The requesting party shall be given an opportunity to supply additional information and may submit a revised request, which will be treated as a new request.

(d) *Payment of fees.* The submission of a FOIA request constitutes an agreement to pay applicable fees assessed up to \$25.00 unless the requesting party specifies a willingness to pay a greater or lesser amount or seeks a fee waiver or reduction in fees.

(1) *Fees in excess of \$25.00.* When Amtrak determines or estimates that applicable fees are likely to exceed \$25.00, the requesting party shall be notified of estimated or actual fees, unless a commitment has been made in advance to pay all fees. If only a portion of the fee can be estimated readily, Amtrak shall advise the requester that the estimated fee may be a portion of the total fee.

(i) In order to protect requesters from large and/or unexpected fees, Amtrak will request a specific commitment when it estimates or determines that fees will exceed \$100.00.

(ii) A request shall not be considered received, and further processing carried out until the requesting party agrees to pay the anticipated total fee. Any such agreement must be memorialized in writing. A notice under this paragraph will offer the requesting party an opportunity to discuss the matter in order to reformulate the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.

(iii) Amtrak will hold in abeyance for forty-five (45) days requests requiring agreement to pay fees and will thereafter deem the request closed. This action will not prevent the requesting party from refiling the FOIA request with a fee commitment at a subsequent date.

(2) *Fees in excess of \$250.* When Amtrak estimates or determines that allowable charges are likely to exceed \$250, an advance deposit of the entire fee may be required before continuing to process the request.

(e) *Information regarding fee category.* In order to determine the appropriate fee category, a request should indicate whether the information sought is intended for commercial use or whether the requesting party is a member of the staff of an educational or non-commercial scientific institution or a representative of the news media.

(f) *Records concerning other individuals.* If the request is for records concerning another individual, either a written authorization signed by that individual permitting disclosure of those records to the requesting party or proof that the individual is deceased (*i.e.*, a copy of a death certificate or an obituary) will help to expedite processing of the request.

§ 701.6 Release and processing procedures.

(a) *General provisions.* In determining records that are responsive to a request, Amtrak will ordinarily include only records that exist and are in the possession and control of the Corporation as of the date that the search is begun. If any other date is used, the requesting party will be informed of that date.

(b) *Authority to grant or deny requests.* Amtrak's FOIA officer is authorized to grant or deny any request for records.

(c) *Notice of referral.* If Amtrak refers all or any part of the responsibility for responding to a request to another organization, the requesting party will be notified. A referral shall not be considered a denial of access within the meaning of this part. All consultations and referrals of requests will be handled according to the date that the FOIA request was initially received.